

MECHANICAL MEMORIES MAGAZINE

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*The only UK magazine dedicated to
Vintage coin-operated amusement machines*

Mechanical Memories Magazine

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Editorial

Hello, and here we are at long last with the September magazine. I should make the point that it IS the September issue, because there is a fair chance that you might not actually receive it until October! I'm afraid that after a long tedious summer down at Brighton, for a number of reasons it's taken some time to get back into harness with the magazine. But what's new? You've all come to expect it by now anyway.

And talking of Brighton, it was good to see a few of you down at the arcade during the summer – it's really great you made the effort, because no bugger else did! I know I promised I wouldn't moan about Brighton this year, but I really wouldn't have believed that trade could get any worse than the last couple of years.....but it has. So, if anyone out there fancies a vintage penny arcade, I may well have one available very soon, machines included. First come, first served. Great potential!

Now, the year has advanced so much that it is now time to start thinking about the November auction. Just to remind you all, it takes place on Sunday 24th November, usual venue. Entry forms will be included in the October magazine, which by the time you read this, should be out in a couple of weeks. So start thinking about your entries, and start emptying the piggy banks – the big day will be upon us quicker than you think.

Until next time (a couple of weeks)

all the best

Jerry

Front Cover Picture: Clive Baker's Steer-a-Ball at Milestones, Basingstoke

Dreamland

MARGATE

Save Dreamland Update September 2013

Our plans for Dreamland took a very big step forward this month. Ownership of the Dreamland site in Margate transferred to Thanet District Council on 3rd September. In partnership with the Council, the Dreamland Trust will now progress with plans to create a world class visitor attraction for Margate – an amusement park of thrilling historic rides.

Surveyors will be the first on-site to assess the condition of the land, which has stood empty for more than five years. Further work will also be undertaken to protect the three important heritage assets on the site: the Grade II* listed Scenic Railway; the Grade II* listed cinema building and the Grade II Menagerie Cages. During this time, the Dreamland Trust and renowned Hemingway Design team are continuing to lead on developing a brand and will progress with the creative design of the park.

Although this is a key milestone for the project, the compulsory purchase of the site is still subject to legal challenge by the former site owners, which is due to be heard at the Appeals Court on Wednesday 25 and Thursday 26 September.

The transfer of the site to our partner Thanet District Council is one of the biggest milestones in our efforts to return Dreamland to its rightful place as Margate's biggest visitor attraction and to the people and community of Margate.

The Dreamland Trust and TDC have worked very hard to secure this transfer in the best interests of Thanet, as having a large, derelict wasteland in the middle of the seafront has been so detrimental to the image of Margate. The transformation of the town has already started following the opening of Turner Contemporary in 2011, and the reopening of Dreamland as the world's first amusement park of thrilling historic rides in 2015 will be another big step forward for the resort.

We hope to be able to cross the final hurdle at the Court of Appeal later this month. We have the right team in place to deliver this project and, with the necessary funding now available to us, we are confident that the people and businesses of Thanet will not have to wait too long now to see visible progress on site.

MISSING RIDES

In the days and weeks before the handover of the site, unfortunately a number of our rides were scrapped by the then owners of Dreamland, who would not allow us on site to remove them. The Dreamland Trust was granted access to the Dreamland site by Margate Town Centre Regeneration Company in June to undertake an inventory and mark various component parts of the Historic Rides Collection owned by the Dreamland Trust. This was the first time the Trust had been allowed on site or given access to the collection since the CPO process began almost two years ago.

The Historic Rides Collection has been collated by the Dreamland Trust, over a decade; many of the rides being rescued or donated by supporters of the Save Dreamland Campaign. The Dreamland Trust worked with MTCRC to identify all the parts of the rides; each one being spray painted with a distinctive pink identification mark. Their removal and disposal via scrap merchants, or onward sale, is viewed as theft. The police are aware of all the missing items and have visual evidence of the property being removed from the site and are carrying out further surveillance and investigations.

The removal of these items does not impact on our plans or delay the project, but it is a completely pointless loss, especially where several of these rides are the last surviving examples of their type.

The Historic Rides Collection also includes a suite of rides acquired and purchased by The Dreamland Trust, which are currently with external heritage rides restorers where some restoration work has already begun. Other historic collections include a series of amusement park and fairground artefacts and paraphernalia held in secure, off-site storage, and the Dreamland Archive soon to be available as an online learning resource.

We are finalising the rides line-up for the 2015 opening, which will be supported by guest rides and visiting attractions.

Nick Laister

Nick Laister (Chairman, The Dreamland Trust)

www.dreamlandmargate.com
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Blackpool Illuminations: The Greatest Free Show On Earth

by Professor Vanessa Toulmin

Celebrating 'the greatest free show on earth', this souvenir of the Lights features colourful original artwork telling the story of Blackpool's sparkling seaside promenade.

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Publisher: Blackpool Council

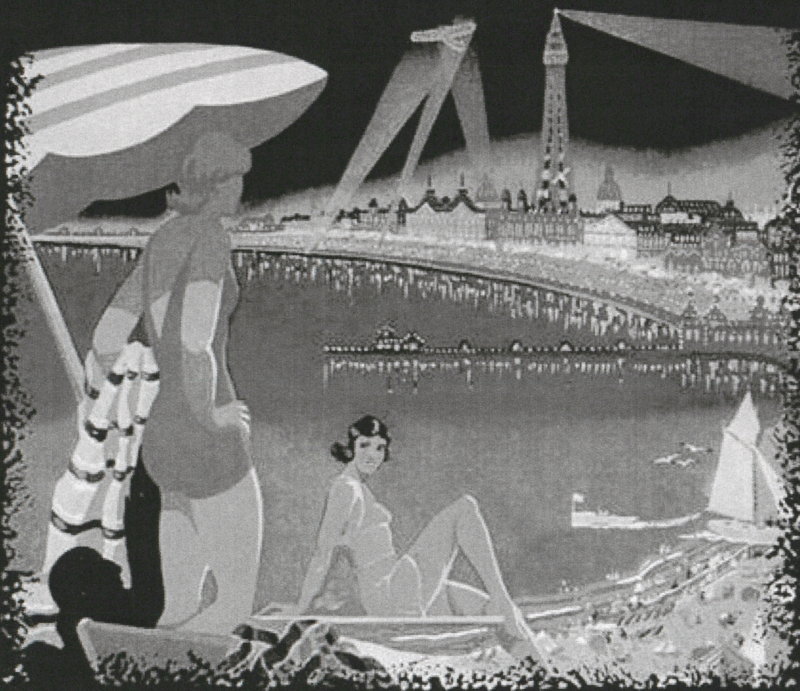
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Blackpool Illuminations

The Greatest Free Show On Earth



Milestones Penny Arcade

By Richard Goddard

Some time ago I wrote an article for MMM regarding my visit to Clive Baker's arcade on Southport Pier. As many readers will know, Clive vacated the pier last year and has now relocated many of his machines at Milestones in Basingstoke. Our own roving reporter Stuart Dale has visited and written about many of the vintage arcades around the country, but as this one is about a 500 mile round trip for Stuart, I thought I would save him the petrol costs and visit it myself; it is less than an hour by road from my home.



The entrance to Clive's 'pier' arcade at Milestones.

Milestones is described as a 'Museum of Living History' and is housed in a 21st century curved steel and glass building which is an appropriate contrast to the full sized Victorian and Edwardian buildings contained within the structure. The Museum is entered from road level and the structure has been sunk into the side of a sloping site. Therefore, when you walk in (there is an entrance fee of £8.70 or £7.70 for seniors), the visitor is at an upper level and you overlook the rooftops of the buildings. These are brick built and appear to give a sense of 'neatly laundered' walls which is in stark contrast to the often created image of soot and smoke stained, poster-covered buildings of Victorian and Edwardian England.

The museum is interesting and it also contains many old vehicles from the former Thorneycroft Company, who were manufacturers of buses, coaches and lorries from 1896 to 1977. There is also a vintage camera shop with hundreds of old cameras, cine cameras and projectors; a Gas Showroom containing many old gas appliances (I well remember the Ascot); a gramophone and wireless shop; an old fire station and numerous vintage workshops, all very well presented.

But what about the slots I hear you say, well they are close by, housed in what I would describe as a corridor space behind the 'old buildings' and running about three quarters the length of the Milestones structure. As an 'arcade' I felt it was rather narrow and did not work very well in terms of space. When people gathered around a machine it left little room for others to pass, especially when families played a slot and also had a push-chair as well. This corridor is only about 10ft to 12ft wide and when I was there it was crammed full of people, which is very good but it felt rather restricted. However, that is a side issue, the most important element is the fact that here we have the opportunity for people to enjoy the vintage penny arcade. If the space was disappointing the slots certainly were not. I counted over ninety machines, and some rare ones among them.

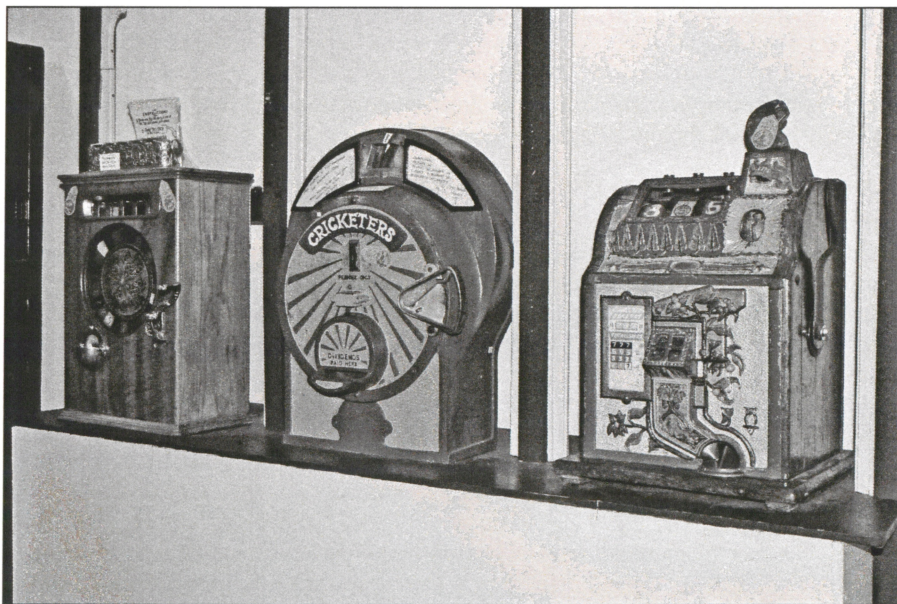
I spent some time talking to a young lad who was the keyman, an enthusiastic chap but certainly kept on his toes all the time by the clientele – "*excuse me young man, that machine over there did not pay out*". He raised his eyebrows slightly and quickly followed the sprightly octogenarian looking lady with her grandchildren to the offending machine. Later I found him in the process of trying to fix the 'Jolly Fireman Racer' whose 'string' had come adrift again. I asked him which machine gave the most trouble, he did tell me but I will not reveal that until closer to the end – see if you can guess as I recall many of the machines on display!

As I walked through the arcade I was pleasantly surprised at the variety of machines. At the arcade frontage is a Laughing Sailor (one of two there) and as you walk through the entrance area under a rather pleasant and colourful '*Milestones Pier*' sign, flanked each side by octagonal turret structures (which I think came from Southport Arcade), the machines immediately greet the visitor. There are many change converter machines that give you the required large old pennies, so put in a few pounds and off you go. There were a number of machines not working, among them a Hawtin clutching hand: it would have been interesting to see that in operation.

There is a World's Fair jigsaw pin table that I enjoyed playing and a lovely Oliver Whales Victory Ball which I also spent some time on; it is fascinating how the ball randomly bounces from one gallery to the other and back up again.

There are quite a number of machines to suit a cross section of ages from a couple of kiddy rides and animated puppet shows, to wall machines and large floor standing machines. Amongst the wall machines is an Oracle fortune teller, a Corn Exchange and a few vending machines. There are quite a number of allwins: Saxony, Pilwin, BMCo, O.W. KitKat, and an old Cresset. Bryans is well represented with the old favourite Payramid (1930s version), a Clock, All Sport, Double Decker pusher, Hidden Treasure, Bullion and the three Magic Machines. A few bandits are present; Mills and Sega and also a Callie sat next to a Bradshaw's Little Stockbroker, renamed Cricketers, which in turn is next to a well aged Poinsettia.

Among the floor standing machines there are a number of cranes including a fine Novelty Merchantman, majestically commanding its own space, standing upright with aloof dignity next to The Drunkards Dream. There are a number of other working models: Spiritualists Room, The Haunted Churchyard, The Prisoners at Work and I think I noticed the American Execution. Other items include a 2 player Monkey Climber, a Peerless Viewer, 2 player Grand National, a Madam Zasha fortune teller, 2 player hockey table and a couple of grip testers. Ahrens is also well represented with a Palmist, a Piledriver and a 2 player Football game.



Callie roulette, Little Stockbroker (Cricketers) and Poinsettia bandit.

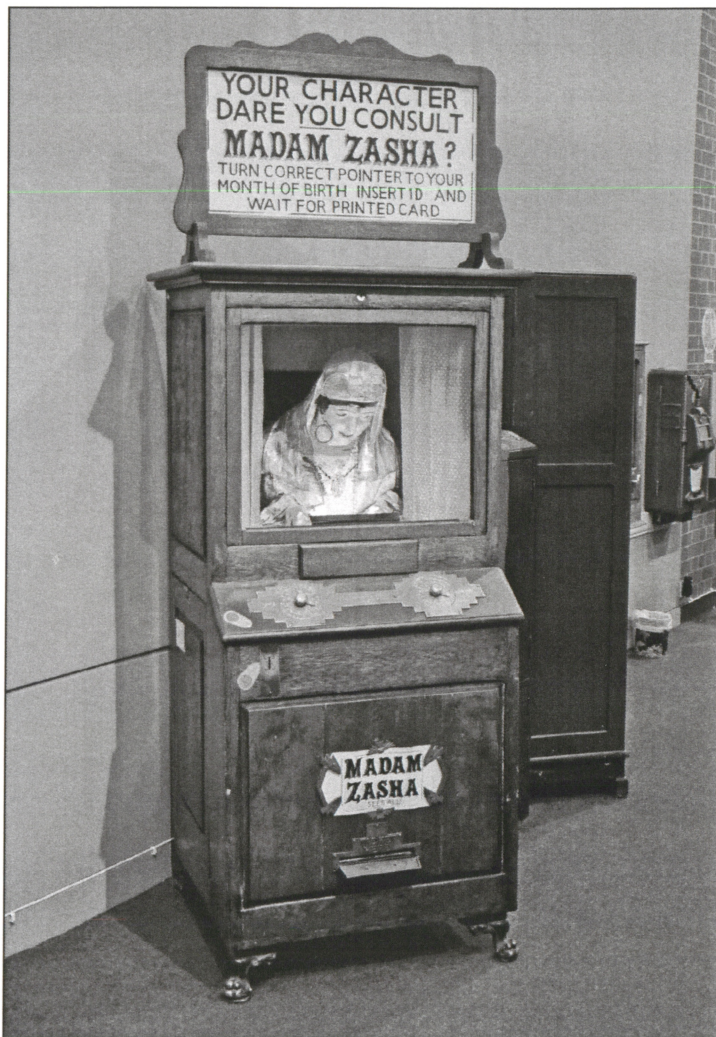
There are a couple of Steer a Ball machines, which is one of my favourite games, a 6 player merchandiser (Waltonian?) a few shooters and towards the end of the arcade there is a lovely line of 7 Mutoscope machines. The arcade comes to an end whereby on exit, you can shake the well-worn hand of Merlin the Magician, who will *'tell you the strength of your personality'*. I noticed a number of small children cowering against their parents upon seeing this character! He conjured up thoughts in my mind of a precursor to Dr Who's Davros, cast in metal!

It was interesting to actually examine some of the machines that I have only ever seen by way of a photograph or the internet; the reality is sometimes quite unexpected. The size of some machines, which is not always easily estimated from a photo, is surprising. The Cricketers (Little Stockbroker) is huge – nothing little about that, it must weigh a ton! But the World's Fair Jigsaw pintable is quite small. It is an extremely pleasurable experience to casually walk around looking at, and playing, all these vintage vestiges of former times.



A line of no less than seven Mutoscopes!

I could go on listing the machines but rather than just mention them all here, why not take a trip to Milestones and experience all these lovely slots for yourself, I certainly intend to go back again; it is well worth a visit. I took many photos of the machines and arcade and really do not know which ones to include with this article. There were so many lovely machines there, so I will leave it to Jerry to pick a selection!



Madam Zasha fortune teller, with a Kraft working model to the side.

Clive should be congratulated for setting up this arcade and therefore managing to retain a piece of our bygone heritage in this way. I applaud his efforts and the hard work that must have gone into creating this piece of intrinsically British amusement legacy and certainly hope that this attraction will remain here for some considerable time. Certainly everyone I saw there was enjoying playing the machines, especially the children and to latch a vintage arcade onto the back of such an attraction seems ideal. Milestones have the ubiquitous café for light refreshments, so if Stuart does venture down and visit he will be able to have a pot of tea with some cake.

So what was the least reliable machine in the arcade? Well I think you will be surprised, because according to the keyman it is the change machines. He told me they were often giving trouble..... I always knew mechanical slots were better than electronic gizmos!

Richard Goddard



A nice line of wall machines, with some equally nice fairground panelling below.

Jerry and the Jukeboxes

By Martin Larcombe

Having not been to Brighton Mechanical Memories Museum before and with a Jukebox & Retro Fair at the racecourse, it was the perfect opportunity to visit both at the same time, so we booked a hotel on the seafront and headed down the M23. We arrived on Friday, toured The Lanes, carefully steering my girlfriend away from the jewellery shops. We ate and drank as you do, then headed off to find Mechanical Memories. It was the evening, we headed for the pier, walked west at beach level and found MMM penny arcade fairly easily so planned to return in the morning to play. Despite Jerry's occasional (!) complaints about Brighton, I thought it had smartened itself up a bit in the last few years; a coat of paint on the seafront makes all the difference and not too much rowdiness from the multitude of hen/stag weekends that graze through the town.

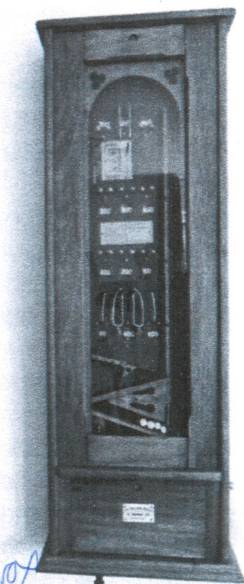


- 125 Elegant German cast iron early 20th century vending machine. Tall, sleek machine, with key and supply of coins.
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- 131 5 vintage arcade signs, double sided. *150*
- 132 Vintage arcade advertising sign, painted by Gary Bignall. *230*
- 133 Large R&W allwin case and parts for restoration. ~~5~~ *60*
- 134 Ornamental cast iron machine stand. *55*
- 135 Box of 60 1960s 45 rpm records. *15*
- 136 Large Budweiser neon sign (not working). *20*
- 137 Shove ha'penny board. *£20*
- 138 Framed slot machine prints suitable for games room. *8*
- 139 Round light-up face arcade wall light. *25*
- 140 Extremely rare Pickwick patent Victorian long-case bagatelle wall machine. In good working order, on old penny play. *700*

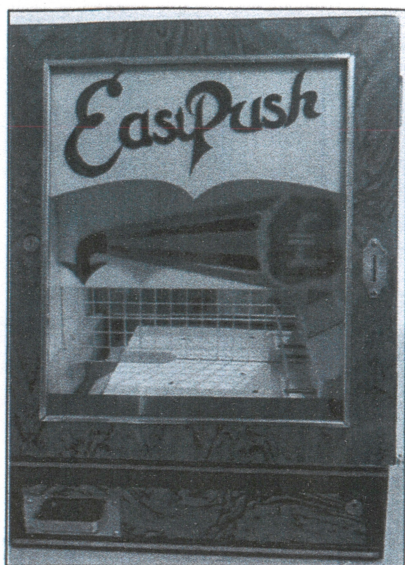
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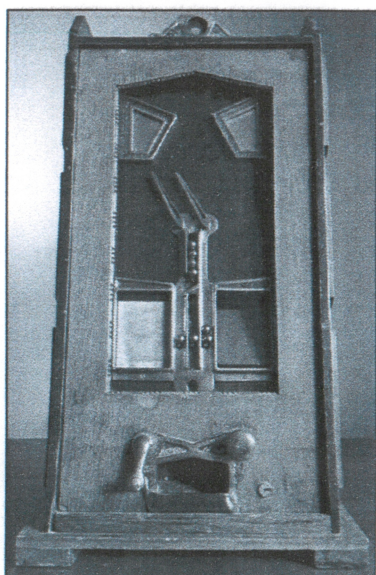
Lot 140



Lot 150



Lot 174



Lot 230



Lot 234

Anyway, come the morning, after a leisurely lie in, with Seagulls and SUN waking us, we headed down to meet Jerry. On approach, hey ho! Excellent, the doors are open, we walked in, "Hello Jerry, I am Martin Larcombe and this is Pam" a glazed look as he searched his memory bank for whichever member this was, "from the auction last year." "Oh, hello Martin" still uncertain, "how are you?" After a bit of banter, we looked around the excellent display of machines, bought some pennies and started to play (just a note for any members visiting, don't mention the parking charges)!

We really enjoyed the variety of different machines and had great fun playing them. They were all in good working order and there was even a scary eyed looking jazz band to keep us entertained. There were a few other punters drifting in from time to time to have a look and play. One pretty young girl, who was on her own, approached Jerry and said, "Do you mind if I take pictures?"..... Jerry "that's OK, but you need to play the machines"young girl "can I flash?" Jerry "No...no flashing." Well Jerry, if a pretty young girl comes up and says "Can I flash?" I would take a little longer before I gave an answer!



*Above, the Jazz Band, made by Modern Enterprises c. early 1950s.
Opposite page, Martin waiting in eager anticipation to enter my arcade.*



Pam playing the Shield Catcher.

Thought I would try and list some of the machines we enjoyed playing: Sky Jump, Conveyor, Carousel allwin, and Bryans Pyramid (really nice condition & quite rare – but don't tell anyone) Gypsy Fortune, 3 Magic Machines, Ski Slope (impossible to win – go try it)! Eleveses, The Answerite, Steer-a-Ball, What the Butler Saw mutoscope, a nice allwin 24 cup and a crane. So as you can see, quite a variety of machines.

After a visit to the beach café right next to Jerry's called 'Grand Junction' for fish 'n' chips (which was quite good), we headed off, jumped on a number 2 bus and headed for the Racecourse which sits above the town with great views of the surrounding area.

The Jukebox show is not really a slotties collectors show but it is worth a visit. A few old American 50s cars are lined up outside, music is streaming out of the venue speakers and quite a variety of jukeboxes, records, glassware, general memorabilia and clothes are all on offer. It's great to see so many restored Jukeboxes of that era. Prices varied from sensible to silly but we enjoyed taking in the atmosphere and just looking at the variety of items that are considered collectable these days (don't throw anything out, it may be worth a few bob in 40 years' time!).

Having walked the stands we drifted into the bar area where a live band, The Fire Tones were playing some really good jive music. Nice seating areas, with a good crowd dressed for the occasion and a dance floor with some impressive movers on show. So we grabbed a drink, sat down and enjoyed the music, it had a real buzz to it. Eventually we headed back into Brighton having had a really enjoyable day at both locations. If you fancy a trip to Brighton don't hesitate to call in to see Jerry and after our last couple of appalling summers I think he's getting a little disheartened with the limited number of visitors at the MMM Penny Arcade. So if you are on your travels and fancy a good day out, give it a try.

Martin Larcombe

The Road to no Return

By Angie Dobney

It was way back in the 1990s that Trevor and I started on the road to no return, when we got the bug for collecting the lovely machines that we all rush to Coventry once a year to buy and sell. Some people think we're mad (especially when they find out we collect classic cars too – we have three at present, but that's another story). In fact, it was at a classic car show that we first saw a collection of antique amusement machines being displayed. These belonged to Dave Wright; many of you may remember him.

What struck us was not only the look of these lovely machines, but the interest everyone showed and the laughter and fun everyone was having enjoying the simple pleasure of playing them. We nearly bought a Parkers Carousel allwin from Dave, but not knowing their true value at the time declined, thinking it was too expensive. We later found out when we bought one, that his offer was a bargain. Hey, come on, we were novices!

As we lived in Southend, Essex at the time, we thought we'd just trawl around the amusement arcades and ask if anyone had any machines lying out back waiting to be restored. Yeah, I know, we did sound like a pair of prize idiots, as unfortunately, most of the owners had thrown them out to make room for the more moneymaking modern machines. Some people, especially at the Kursaal, did agree it was sad that these lovely old machines had been destroyed.

Eventually we found out about an auction at the Elephant House in Leamington, and bought our first Five-Win allwin, which we still have to this day. That was it, we were hooked on the machines and being at the auctions. I don't know if this strikes a chord with some of you, but once you start collecting one or two machines, you just want more and your love for them grows.

Now, I must add at this point that I suppose Trevor is lucky that I am so enthusiastic about the machines (remember to tell him how lucky he is next time you see him at an auction)! In fact, I did suggest that if we ever win the lottery we could maybe buy an old fire station and then fill it with steam engines (my other love), old fire engines (our son's love), classic cars, buses and slot machines.

But I digress. So off we travelled to all the various venues: Cherry Hinton, Junktion, Kempton Racecourse and not to be forgotten, Saffron Walden, where we all met up and enjoyed a lovely breakfast in the local café and then sat in the pub, taking it in turns to see when the machines were being auctioned after the very long list of memorabilia.

So once we had our collection of allwins and Beromats (Trevor was Christened the Beromat man), what to do so others could enjoy them? Well, we set about building a trailer so that we could take them to classic car shows and people could play on them for a small fee. We went to a car show at a village school in Corringham, Essex where the local vicar regularly came to play on the machines. One particular bandit paid out quite frequently, and I remember the vicar saying to Trevor that he had blessed it, and Trevor said "in whose favour?" That really caused a laugh.

We also did quite a few charity events, and it was great to see the kids having fun, especially those whose lives were quite difficult. At one event we organised through the car club, it rained quite heavily, but the kids were still playing the machines, such is their draw.

Unfortunately, with so many machines we were running out of space, so it was time to move house. We found a lovely 1847 Victorian house, but the one drawback was that it needed restoring – you guessed it, we bought it (well, I did say people think we are mad). The great thing was that it had a lot of rooms that could be filled with all sorts of machines. Trevor, where are you.....? That's another story,

Next time, Police, babies and Yarmouth here we come.

Angie Dobney



Two from Goldings

By Robert Rowland

Just recently, I acquired two 1960s electro-mechanical wall machines, which are both very similar in design and also in game play. One is called **Jugola** and the other is called **Rouletto**, and they were both made by *Goldings Automatics* of Colchester, Essex. A fair number of our local arcades here in Mablethorpe had one of these two machines back in the 1960s.

Starting with Jugola, the front of the machine shows a circus clown juggling twelve balls, all numbered 3, 6 or 9. These balls are imprinted onto a large round disk that constantly revolves in a clockwise direction. A small lamp shines through the disk and illuminates each of the numbers as the disk revolves. When a coin is inserted at the top of the machine, it drops down onto a steel pin before entering the lit area and the disk stops revolving. If the disk is stopped dead centre on a numbered ball, the machine pays out the amount shown, 3d, 6d, or 9d.

The sequence of numbers is 3, 6, 9, 3, 6, 9, 3, 6, 9, 3, 6, 9, with lose positions between each number. Despite the disk having twelve winning numbers, only six of these can come up; there are four winning positions for 3d but only one each for 6d and 9d. In addition, there are a total of twenty-four losing positions where the disk can stop between the numbered balls, so overall there are thirty-six possible outcomes, with only six being winners. Jugola is a game that at first sight appears easy to win, but the odds are certainly stacked against you. The Rouletto machine operates on exactly the same principle, and both games are very addictive.

On many occasions, when the disk stops it appears to just slide off a winning number and onto the lose area. Upon looking inside both machines, all is revealed! Each of the thirty-six positions on the disk corresponds to a steel tooth on a drum that rotates with the disk. On the numbers that don't pay out, there is no corresponding tooth on the drum, so when the drum stops in these positions it just slides onto the next space, which is a 'lose'. This is not an operator adjustment from some time in the machine's past; it's the way the machines were made.

Rouletto has a thirty-six position roulette wheel, constantly turning in a clockwise direction. The wheel has twenty-four noughts, four 2s, four 4s and four 6s, but like Jugola, only half of these winning positions can come up. To stop on a winning number on either machine will need a lot of luck. Despite what I now know, both machines are still a lot of fun to play. On very odd occasions you can defy the odds and come out on top, but it all makes sense now – why, back in the 1960s I never had much success on this type of machine.

There was one other similar machine from the same stable that was doing the rounds in the 1960s that was called Bandito. I feel sure many of you will be more familiar with that machine, which possibly made up a set of three.

Next month I shall be telling you all about a Mablethorpe reunion with an old friend from the 1960s. – don't miss it!

Robert Rowland



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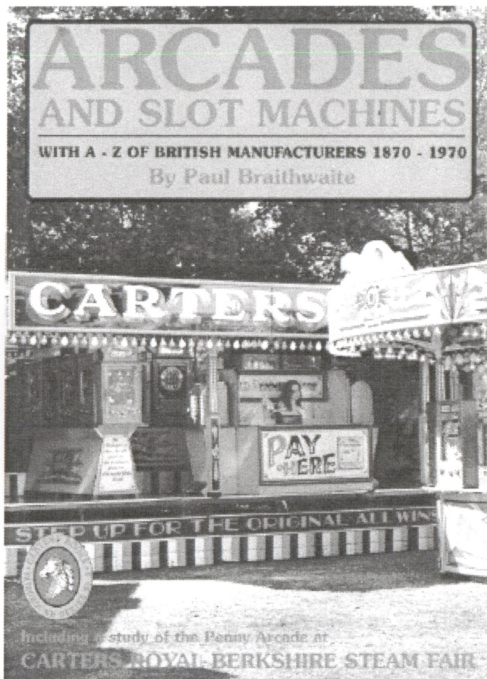
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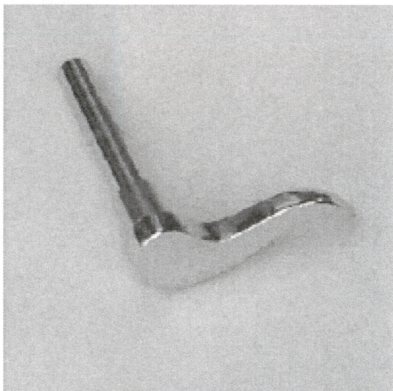
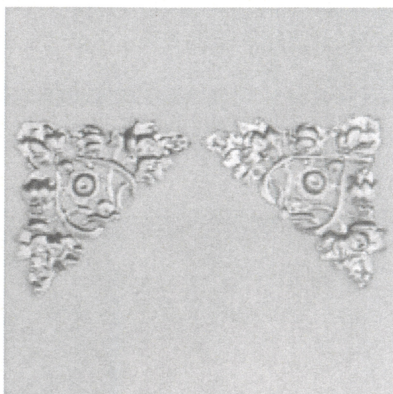
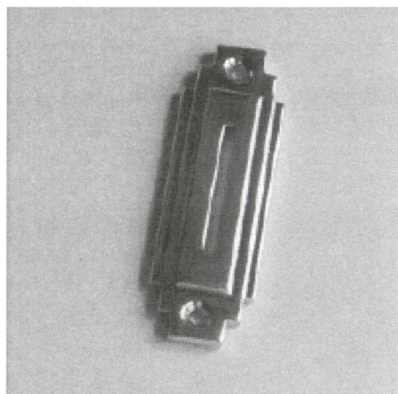
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